

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

2 2
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 31, 1932

3 Hh
(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Onions for the Low-Cost Meal." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

- - - 0 - - -

When Betty Jane saw Cousin Susan peeling onions for dinner she turned up her small nose.

"No onions for me," said Betty Jane. "I don't like them."

"Tut, tut, young lady," said Uncle Silas. "Don't be scornful about one of our best and most interesting vegetables."

"Interesting? Onions?" exclaimed Betty Jane.

"Indeed they are. And anyone who stands at the head of her history class ought to know it. The onion has a long and quite exciting history."

"Now, Uncle Silas, I think you're just teasing me."

"Not a bit of it. If you don't believe it, let me tell you some facts from this old reference book here about onions. Listen. The onion is a food as old as history. No one knows where it first grew, but all the records show that it was widely used in ancient times, in Egypt, Palestine and the Orient. Even the old Romans loved their onions. The Bible speaks of the onion as one of the foods that the Israelites longed for in the wilderness. They actually complained to Moses because of the lack of onions. And in Egypt, historians report an inscription on the Great Pyramid stating that the laborers who erected it ate over 1600 talents worth of onions and garlic. If you figure that up, it comes to over three million dollars worth! The Egyptians were so fond of onions that they used to use them on their altars. In fact, this vegetable seems to have been popular the world over, yes, both in ancient times and the present day. And here's something else interesting about this vegetable. It is own cousin to the beautiful Easter lily."

"I can say even more than Uncle Silas in favor of onions," said Cousin Susan. "I can say that no good cook can get along without onions for seasoning, at least. And they're both inexpensive and healthful—two other points in their favor. This year onions are cheaper than ever."

Cousin Susan is right. Onions are cheap this season. The marketing specialists tell me that onions were never as low in cost. In fact, much of the large crop won't even be shipped. So if you're planning low-cost meals, you can often use onions in place of the more expensive vegetables of similar food value.

What are onions valuable for? Well, they have considerable mineral and

vitamin value. This is true particularly of raw onions, for vitamins B and C are partly destroyed in cooking. And then onions are valuable for flavor. As I said, even people who say they don't like onions usually do like at least "a hint" or "a suspicion" of the flavor in many dishes. Often they like it without knowing it's there. For example, many people who wouldn't touch an onion, like a faint flavor of it in French dressing for salads. A drop of onion juice will give this or even just rubbing a cut onion around the bowl before you mix the dressing.

But people who do like onions can enjoy the many delicious onion dishes--and lots of them exist. You'll find a good collection in your green cookbook--or in any other reliable cookbook. Aside from sauces, soups, stews, salads, and stuffings, in which onions are used chiefly for their flavor, let's count up some of the favorite dishes featuring onions. Onions and apples, fried together. Onions and tomatoes, stewed together. Onions stuffed and baked--nice with a roast of meat. Liver and onions. Steak and onions. Onions baked in tomato sauce. Onion soup, nice with cheese toast. Creamed onions. Plain boiled onions buttered. Spring salad, featuring rings of onion. And French fried onions. French fried onions aren't as well known as they deserve to be. Yet they're easy to make and delicious. You can make up a large supply at a time and keep part of them over for another meal. Shall I tell you how to make them? Skin the onions, slice them very thin, and separate the slices into rings. Then dip the rings into a thin batter made of flour, milk, egg, and salt. Drain well and fry in deep fat.

Here's a tip for the thrifty housewife. You can serve Hamburg patties on onion rings often instead of the more expensive steak and onions.

Of course, you know that the kinds of onions are legion and that people of other countries have favorite varieties quite unlike our common varieties. For us good Americans, the Recipe Lady recommends the brown-skinned, small onion for seasoning; the round, white, very small bulb for pickles; and the white Bermuda or Spanish onion, with its mild flavor, for eating raw in salads and so on and for cooking.

I could go on talking about onions for another hour. But I won't, because I have an idea you're waiting for the economy menu I promised you on Friday. Well, here it is. The inexpensive meat dish is roast breast of lamb and onions, both stuffed with delicious forcemeat stuffing. You'll want that recipe, but it's a long one and I'm going to save it and give it to you tomorrow. Roast breast of lamb and onions, stuffed with forcemeat, as I said; Boiled flaky rice and gravy, of course; Pickled beets; and, for dessert, Jellied grapes and Crisp cookies. For the jellied grapes use a gelatin base--a lemon jelly mixture is best--and mold in it Tokay or Malaga grapes that have been cut in half and seeded.

Tomorrow, then, bring your pencils for a fine recipe for an inexpensive roast of lamb and a very good stuffing, also stuffed baked onions to go with it.

